

**OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN EARL BLUMENAUER
APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST FORM
FISCAL YEAR 2011**

Project Details

- 1. Project title:** Training the Health IT Workforce: Jobs of the Future
- 2. Organization name and address** (the recipient of the funds): Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus, 12000 SW 49th Avenue, Portland, OR 97219
- 3. Contact information**
 - a. Project's primary contact:** Kristin Watkins, Associate Vice President for College Advancement
 - b. Daytime telephone number/ mobile phone number:** (503) 977-4696/ [REDACTED]
 - c. Email Address:** kwatkins@pcc.edu
 - d. Project location** (if different than organization's address): Portland Community College campuses, including Sylvania campus, 12000 SW 49th Avenue, Portland, OR 97219; Rock Creek campus, 17705 NW Springville Road, Portland, OR 97229; Cascade campus, 705 N Killingsworth Street, Portland, OR 97217; and Southeast Center, 2305 SE 82nd and Division, Portland, OR 97216.

4. Please describe the requesting organization's main activities.

Portland Community College (PCC) is the largest institution of higher learning in the state, serving more than \$1,424,051 college-age residents in a five-county, 1,500-square mile area in northwest Oregon. During the 2008-2009 school year, more than 87,145 students attended PCC. PCC provides high-quality affordable education and career training for a widely diverse student body, including a high percentage of students of color and first-generation college students. Working in close partnership with local industry leaders, PCC's career training and certificate programs are designed to effectively assist populations that have historically been underrepresented in college and skilled careers get access to the education and training they need to secure high-quality, family wage jobs.

5. Is this organization a public, private non-profit, or private for-profit entity?

PCC is a public entity.

6. From what federal agency and account are you requesting funds (Please be specific –e.g., Department of Housing and Urban Development, Economic Development Initiatives account)?

Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA

7. Briefly describe the activity or project for which funding is requested (no more than 500 words).

The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)'s mandate that all healthcare providers adopt electronic medical records by 2014 highlights a critical training need for Oregon's workforce as well as an opportunity to create new jobs in the healthcare industry. Even as the economy continues to struggle, there is a clear need for workers who can design, develop and manage the projected proliferation of electronic health information. Professionals in this field can expect to attain high quality living-wage jobs in one of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy. A qualified Health IT workforce will benefit all Oregonians by developing and implementing technology that will reduce health care costs and improve the delivery of care.

Portland Community College (PCC) seeks \$206,209 in federal funding to increase the capacity of our newly-developed Health Informatics degree program to 120 students per year. By leveraging PCC's unique combination of training expertise, industry connections and access to diverse populations, this project will increase educational and employment opportunities for workers displaced by the recession while augmenting the supply of trained Health IT workers.

8. What is the purpose of the project? Why is it a valuable use of taxpayer funds? How will the project support efforts to improve the economy and create jobs in Oregon?

Despite record high unemployment rates in Oregon and across the country, there is a dramatic shortage of workers in Health IT that is expected to worsen over the next several years. Without trained professionals to implement and maintain the innovative new systems that are currently in development, we face a barrier to the adoption of practices that will improve human health and advance medical research for generations to come. Investing in Oregon's Health IT workforce today will vastly improve the healthcare system while simultaneously putting Oregonians back to work.

Research performed by Dr. William Hersh, chair of the Department of Medical Informatics and Clinical Epidemiology at the Oregon Health and Science University School of Medicine, predicts that there will be a need for an additional 40,000 Health IT workers nationally in hospitals alone by 2012.¹ In addition to hospitals, jobs will be created in physicians' offices, home healthcare, outpatient clinics and residential care facilities. The total number of jobs available nationwide may be as high as 200,000.² Extrapolating from this data, Dr. Hersh expects that based on the population of the Portland metropolitan area, between 400 and 500 Health IT jobs will be created in the area between now and 2012.

Adding to this demand for Health IT workers is the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's (ARRA) provision that hospitals and private medical practices who implement Electronic Health Records (EHRs) by 2014 receive increased reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid. A transition from paper based medical records to EHRs will not be possible without significant investments in Health Informatics education and training. Dr. Charles Friedman, Deputy Director of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), has estimated that nationally, 60,000 personnel will be needed to implement the Health IT provisions of the ARRA.³

¹ "Characterizing the Health Information Technology Workforce: Analysis from the HIMSS Analytics Database." William Hersh, M.D. and Adam Wright, Ph.D. April 2008. <http://www.billhersh.info/hit-workforce-hersh.pdf>

² *ibid.*

³ Public Health Information Network 2008 Conference Town Hall, September 2, 2009

Having recently launched a new associate's degree program in Health Informatics, Portland Community College (PCC) is ideally positioned to meet the training demands for more Health IT workers in Oregon. Our program is designed to accommodate students who are new to the field of Health IT as well as incumbent workers who have experience in either health care or IT, but require additional training to meet emerging workplace needs or secure new jobs. Students can take courses in the classroom or via Distance Education, maximizing accessibility and statewide impact. PCC's program offers a cost-effective way for students to gain the education and experience needed for careers in Health IT.

PCC serves a five-county area including Washington County, Multnomah County, Columbia County, Yamhill County and Clackamas County, which will allow the Health Informatics degree program to directly benefit Oregon residents and businesses in several Congressional districts, including the 1st District, the 3rd District, and the 5th District. As the most diverse institution of higher learning in the state, PCC can also effectively ensure that populations that have historically been underrepresented both in college and high-paying healthcare careers have access to specialized Health IT training. PCC would work closely with four year universities and graduate programs in the state as well as healthcare providers, vendors and other partners in the design and delivery of the Health Informatics program to ensure it meet business needs, with a goal of helping to create good jobs for Oregon residents.

Graduates of the program can expect to attain high quality, living-wage jobs in one of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy. Additionally, PCC is working with two local education leaders in Health IT – Oregon Institute of Technology and Oregon Health and Science University – to develop a meaningful career ladder so that Oregonians of all skill sets will have access to the benefits of these emerging jobs.

Given high unemployment and the positive outlook for jobs in this field, the demand for this degree and training will outstrip our current capacity. Federal funding will help us scale-up the program and increase enrollment capacity to 120 students.

With federal support, PCC will make the following investments:

- Hire two Health Informatics faculty who will teach additional sections, help train other faculty members in Health IT, and liaise industry and partner institutions such as OHSU to ensure that breakthrough technologies are transferred rapidly to the classroom.
- Purchase simulation software and equipment to train students.
- Integrate additional curriculum materials as necessary, to ensure PCC's program aligns with emerging national standards for Health IT education.

Health IT will help us move beyond the antiquated paper file systems currently employed by the majority of health providers, and propel Oregon's health system into the 21st century. Lifesaving information will be available to health care providers in a matter of seconds, improving care coordination and reducing medical errors. Patients will benefit from improved access to, and enhanced portability of, medical records. Perhaps more significantly, this program will put Americans who have been hard-hit by the recession back to work in high-paying and exciting new careers.

9. Has this project received federal appropriations funding in past fiscal years?

No

9a. If yes, please provide the fiscal year, Department, Account, and funding amount of any previous funding. n/a

Funding Details

10. Amount requested for this project: \$206,209

11. Breakdown/budget of the amount you are requesting for this project (e.g., salary \$40,000; computer \$3,000):

Faculty and staff salaries	\$ 171,209
Software	\$ 15,000
Software fees	\$ 5,000
Server/hardware	\$ 15,000
TOTAL	\$ 206,209

12. What is the total cost of the project? \$279,856

13. Is this project scalable (i.e., If partial funding is awarded, will the organization still be able to use the funds in FY 2011?)?

While this project would be most effective at the full funding level requested, we may be able to reduce the number of additional faculty hired if partial funding is received.

14. What other funding sources (local, regional, state) are contributing to this project or activity? (Please be specific about funding sources and funding amounts)

In 2008, PCC received \$81,000 from the State of Oregon's Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) to develop the Health Informatics degree program. CCWD has recently committed an additional \$100,000 to be distributed among all community colleges in Oregon to increase the capacity and quality of Health IT training. If funded, PCC will commit \$73,647 to support the unfunded portions of the project.

15. Please list public or private organizations that have supported/endorsed this project.

- Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
- Health Information Technology Oversight Council
- Oregon Health Network
- Legacy Health Systems
- Portland Interhospital Physicians Association
- Samaritan Health Services
- Kaiser Permanente
- Peer Technologies
- Oregon Community Health Information Network
- Oregon Medical Association